



Annual Performance Report

2022/23

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1. Introduction

Welcome to Flintshire’s Annual Performance Report (APR). This document gives an overview of the performance of the Council during 2022/23 against the priorities set within our Council Plan 2022/23 and progress against our Well-being Objectives;

- Protecting people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs
- Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities
- Limiting the impact of the Council’s services on the natural environment and supporting the wider communities of Flintshire to reduce their own carbon footprint
- Enabling a sustainable economic recovery and growth
- Supporting people in need to live as well as they can
- Enabling and Supporting Learning Communities

The report covers:

- Actual and comparative performance information.
- Our performance against the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Five Ways of Working and our Own Well-being objectives.

2. Priority Setting

The COVID-19 Pandemic was a challenging time for many and even during 2022, the Council continued to face a number of challenges. However, the pandemic has allowed us to redefine and evaluate our strategies, future goals, and plans. What was previously the Council’s response to the pandemic, for most part has now become ‘a new business as usual’ model.

The four themes identified for further improvement as the Council’s future priorities, have been shaped by Councillors across our Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny functions, and these being:

- **Improvement in internal and external stakeholder engagement, consultation, and participation**
- **Development of the Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)**
- **Sustainability of Resources and Resilience of Workforce**
- **Members Training (due to the high intake of new members)**

These are detailed further in the Council’s Annual Governance Statement (2022/23).

3. Alignment of Council Plan Priorities and Well-Being Objectives

The Annual Performance Report aligns closely with the Council Plan 2022/23 priorities. For 2022/23, the Well-being Objectives have been allocated to the respective portfolios as detailed below:

Portfolio	Well-Being Objectives
Education and Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs • Enabling and Supporting Learning Communities • Supporting people in need to live as well as they can
Housing and Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs • Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities • Supporting people in need to live as well as they can
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs
Planning, Environment and Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling a sustainable economic recovery • Protecting people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs • Limiting the impact of the Council’s services on the natural environment and supporting the wider communities of Flintshire to reduce their own carbon footprint • Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities
Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting people in need to live as well as they can
Streetscene and Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting the impact of the Council’s services on the natural environment and supporting the wider communities of Flintshire to reduce their own carbon footprint. • Enabling a sustainable economic recovery
Chief Executives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs • Enabling a sustainable economic recovery

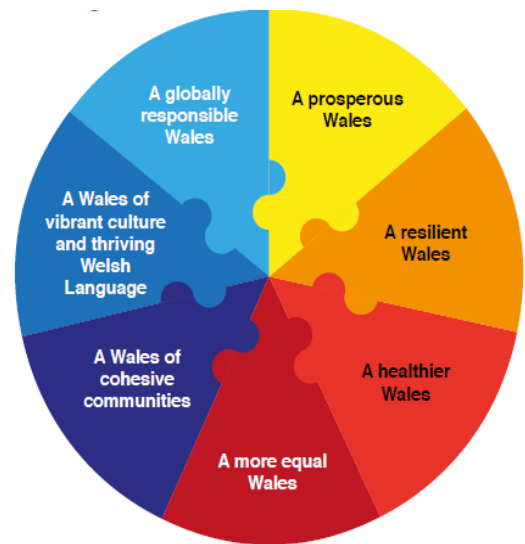
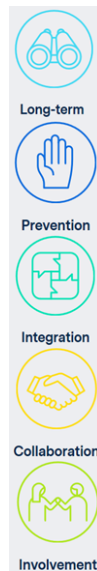
Note: The colour scheme used in this table is used throughout the document for ease of recognition.

3.1 Assessment of Our Well-being Objectives

The Council’s Well-being Objectives have been set in accordance to meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Designated public bodies are required to work individually and collectively to improve well-being in Wales. The seven well-being goals and the five ways of working set a general purpose for public bodies. They also aim to ensure better decisions by:

- considering the long-term
- prevention
- integrated working
- working collaboratively
- being inclusive of people of all ages.



Further details on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the seven Well-being goals can be found by using this [link](#).

Section seven of this report, ‘Future Generations – Five Ways of Working Case Studies’, provides examples of how we have met the ‘Future Generations’ ways of working in some specific areas of work.

Our Well-being Objectives reflect the ‘Impacts’ we intend to make through the actions and activities within each priority. An assessment of the progress against each Objective is made as part of the overall performance for each priority.

4. Areas of High Performance

Services for you – a compilation of the range of services we offer the communities of Flintshire and figures showing what we achieved last year (2022/23);

- There were **1,102** two-hour playscheme sessions delivered across Flintshire during the summer holidays. **30** children were supported to attend via the buddy scheme.
- The Welsh Language Officer delivered **13** projects with **7,346** children and young people benefitting. These projects have promoted the Welsh language greatly.
- **55** primary schools have engaged in the Early Language and Communication training and have accessed toolkits for free to support delivery of the intervention to learners.
- The majority of Flintshire Youth Clubs participating in Cymraeg Bob Clwb with **628** young people engaging.
- **217** Carelink alarms and **73** telecare alarms installed to support people to live independently in their own homes.
- Resettlement of **280** Ukrainians within Flintshire, with the **2nd** highest move-on rate across the whole of Wales.
- **16** sheltered community centres and **35** local groups supported to deliver Croeso Cynnes (Warm Welcome) from November 2022 to March 2023.
- ‘In-year’ Council Tax collection levels for 2022/23 were **97.4%**.
- Delivered **146** business support sessions to **48** social enterprises within Flintshire.
- **43** micro and small rural businesses in North East Wales were supported by the Enterprise Renewal Fund to introduce new products and/or processes.
- Number of Micro-carers has increased in 2022/23, with an additional **11** people delivering services in the county, bringing the total to **34**.
- The North Wales Community Equipment Service has responded to **100%** of its requests for urgent equipment within the **1 day** national response standard.
- Streetscene has successfully installed a total of **15** Dual Electric Vehicle (EV) within **8** council owned car parks enabling up to 30 vehicles to charge at any one time.
- **26** apprentices across **14** disciplines were appointed in September 2022.
- **53** young people moved from a NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) status into further education or employment.
- Flintshire Sorted (Drug & Alcohol Team), with support of the Youth Justice Service Anti-Social Behaviour Officer have delivered **59** drug and alcohol community outreach sessions in **7** locations, with **1693** young people engaged. They have also delivered **725** sessions in **13** schools in Flintshire (**5233** young people engaged).
- Approximately **150** children and young people who were at the Eisteddfod in Denbigh participated in activities provided by the Council’s Youth Services.
- **75** young people have benefitted from the Mindful Art Project.
- **£330,024** (Discretionary Housing Payment allocation and additional Government funding) spent supporting households with additional payments to assist with rent due to impact of the cost-of-living rising costs.

5. Highlights of Performance and What Has Been Achieved

5.1 Portfolio: Education and Youth

Strong Performance

- The Integrated Youth Provision team have successfully implemented Upshot, a monitoring, evaluation and learning tool which is improving data collection and usage.
- A total of 3,975 children were registered across the county summer holiday playschemes. In total there was an overall attendance of 15,556 and 1,102 two-hour playscheme sessions delivered across Flintshire. 30 children were also supported to attend via the buddy scheme.
- The Welsh Language Officer delivered 13 projects with 7,346 children and young people benefitting. These innovative projects have allowed us to promote the Welsh language greatly.
- 53 young people moved from a NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) status into further education or employment. The Resilience Team supported 105 young people in total.
- Period Dignity Grant: The Portfolio commissioned an external provider for a second year to deliver period products to a range of services within education and the wider community. 'Home packs' were provided direct to homes of girls and young women aged 8-18 years that attend a Flintshire school. The benefit of this approach means that students get a wider range to choose from. All primary and secondary schools were provided with a proportion of grant funding to purchase sanitary products to 'top up their existing supplies'. Period products were distributed to each of the 9 Foodbank centres and all youth groups / projects.
- Period Dignity Grant continued; We also linked with the Council's resettlement coordinator to support the refugees from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria now based in Flintshire. Distribution took many forms including via community hubs and libraries.
- Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards (RRRS) grant funding was used to support training for early years staff in playgroups and day nurseries, delivering early years education on behalf of the Council known as Early Entitlement. The focus was on the Leuven Scales of Wellbeing. 39 of the 45 settings attended the 2-part Leuven Scales course (81 staff). Some settings have since used the Scales as part of their support of children's wellbeing.
- Primary schools in Flintshire continue to embrace the Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus objectives in order to increase the social use of Welsh. 4 schools have been awarded the Silver award and 4 schools the Bronze award for Cymraeg Campus since April 2022. The 'Criwiau Cymraeg' in all schools work actively to determine the school priorities and help to decide on activities for their schools and some are effective in involving the wider school community.
- In 2022/23 we have implemented the of Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Turnaround Programme
- Flintshire Sorted (Drug & Alcohol Team), with support of the YJS Anti-Social Behaviour Officer have delivered 59 drug and alcohol community outreach sessions in 7 locations, 1693 young people engaged. They have also delivered 725 sessions in 13 schools in Flintshire (5233 young people engaged)
- The YJS has supported 61 victims and delivered 756 hours of reparation activity within the community and the YJS continue to implement Public Health Wales Trauma Informed Toolkit

- A number of policy documents including Participation Strategy and Disproportionality Action Plan have been agreed upon this year
- Devised a Youth Violence Action Plan and this is being aligned to the work of the Regional Serious Violence Duty Task and Finish Group.
- Continue to deliver community workshops with Theatr Clwyd, Sorted and Youth Services to increase awareness of the impact of anti-social behaviour has on communities and individuals
- At Ysgol Croes Atti, Glannau Dyfrdwy refurbishment of internal and external areas was completed. This included classroom structural alterations, improving safeguarding, improving accessibility and replacement of some windows and doors, along with improvements to the play area and fencing. This was completed in January 2023, with an investment circ. £0.850m. In addition to refurbishments a new standalone dedicated childcare unit for 20 children was delivered and funded through Welsh Government Childcare Grant investment circ. £0.375m
- At Ysgol Glanrafon, Mold, work undertaken included a new extension to increase Welsh medium capacity from 309 full time pupils to 356, refurbishment of existing school buildings and the conversion of space to form dedicated childcare unit. Works completed and handed over in Summer 2022 investment circ. £4.3m.

Strong Stories

- **Consent Project** - in partnership with Theatre Clwyd, the Youth Service delivers an annual project around “Consent”. Consent delivers interactive workshops, using live performance, to explore the issues arising from Sexual Consent. In a safe and supportive environment, young people explore what makes a healthy relationship, the effects of alcohol and drugs on decision making, and finally, how the law works in relation to Consent. The young people are presented with a scenario performed by professional actors. The Consent Project is delivered bi-lingually to all schools and entirely through the medium of Welsh at Ysgol Maes Garmon. In 2022/23 we have delivered The Consent Project to all Year 9 students across Flintshire Schools.
- **LGBT+ Engagement work** - The Youth Service currently work in partnership with Viva and Pride Cymru. This partnership enables a weekly provision for LGBT+ Youth Club based in Deeside. The collaboration came as a result of discussions with young people in Flintshire who identified the need to have a specific group for LGBT+. The group is funded by Pride Cymru and the sessions are delivered by Youth workers with LGBT+ knowledge.
- **Ysgol Maes Garmon** - The School and Community Immersion Youth Worker based at the school sourced funding for the Proud Trust to deliver information sessions to year 9 students. This was following issues identified around hate speech and some young people feeling targeted and bullied. Following on from the work with the Proud Trust, the School and Community Immersion Youth Worker delivered education sessions to year 9 students during their English lessons based on gender identity, pronouns, and sexuality.
- **Event** - A group of young people in Connah’s Quay who struggle with anxiety, low mood, self-esteem, and confidence took part in a special event to support their specific needs. Although these young people struggle with school attendance due to their mental health, they all turned up and engaged in every part of the session.

- **Steering Group** – a group of young people from Ysgol Maes Garmon and Connah’s Quay High School met to create the new logo for the Youth Service. The new logo is currently being developed by a design team and will soon be used as part of the Youth Service re-branding.
- **Ysgol Trefynnon** - the Community Immersion Youth Worker was asked to deliver 6 weeks of sessions for a group from the LGBTQ+ community in April 2022. The group enjoyed the sessions and stressed they would like to have a space where they could express themselves and talk freely about their feelings and emotions; an LGBTQ+ group was set up in school to accommodate this and the group meet during lunchbreaks. The sessions have been young person led and students have been able to discuss personal issues such as - how and when they feel it is appropriate to ‘come out’ to parents and friends. The ‘Proud Trust’ have provided support with session ideas and advice. The young people have been creative and expressed emotions through mask making, which were displayed at school in June 2023 to celebrate Pride month. The students have enjoyed and owned a regular supportive space of their own where they can use their voices, be heard and to be able to express themselves.
- **Celf a Lles (Bilingual Arts Project)** - This project was run and delivered via our Youth Clubs with the main aim of supporting young people to use art as a tool to improve their mental health and wellbeing. Eight of our youth clubs participated in this project and 44 young people entered their work into the Urdd National Arts, Crafts and Technology Eisteddfod. Many pieces of work made it through to the county level stage, and one young person’s work made it to the national level.
- **Can a Lles (Welsh Music Project ‘Dal I Ddod’)** - The main purpose of this music project was to allow young people to be creative and express their thoughts and feelings around the disruption of the global pandemic. We hosted weekly sessions during GCSE music lessons at Ysgol Maes Garmon with twelve Year 10 students over the course of 8 weeks. The students engaged in a song writing process. The song can be found [here!](#)
- **Cwrs Trochi** - Ysgol Maes Garmon run a successful Welsh immersion course for children wishing to move from an English primary school into their Welsh medium secondary school. The Welsh Language Officer runs sessions for the young people who are considering making this switch. 41 young people participated, and many joined the Year 6/7 immersion course, choosing to move to Ysgol Maes Garmon for their secondary education.
- **Urdd National Eisteddfod Denbigh** – Flintshire’s Youth Service attended the Urdd Eisteddfod in May 2022 in Denbigh to run arts and play sessions with over 150 children and young people at the Eisteddfod participating in the activities. The day on the Eisteddfod Maes was a great experience for the Youth Service team to be immersed in the language and culture of Wales.
- **Cymraeg Bob Clwb** – is a project that is being delivered in our youth clubs. The main aim is to have the Welsh language and culture more prominent in our Youth Club buildings. There are easy everyday Welsh phrases relevant to the setting around the buildings to encourage use of the language. The majority of Flintshire Youth Clubs are participating well in the project, with 628 young people engaging. This aim is to normalise the use of the Welsh language outside of the school boundaries and bring it into our communities.

- **Cymraeg Bob Cynllun** - The main aim of this project was to deliver training to encourage the Summer Community Playscheme Members to use more conversational Welsh during the open access Summer Playschemes.
- **Digital Composing and 'DJ' Workshops** – The essence of this project was to allow young people to express themselves through electronic music and learn new skills as a 'DJ'. In total 12 sessions were delivered with 101 young people participating.
- **Mindful Art** – This project aimed to give young people skills to learn how to use sketching as a way of keeping their mind active and a way of channelling their positive creativity. Four youth clubs ran sessions providing young people the opportunity to express themselves visually. In total there were 75 young people that have benefitted from this project.
- **Children's Charter Event** – An event led by Betsi Cadwallader University Health Board (BCUHB) in spring 2022. The event brought children and young people to Erddig Hall in Wrexham to gather their thoughts and ideas on various topics that will then enable BCUHB to create a new Children's Charter. The Charter will be a set of standards that organisations work to, to make sure children and young people are treated fairly and have a voice. The various sections included, 'What is kindness?', 'What helps me learn?', and 'What helps me keep positive?'. There were approximately 250 children and young people in attendance at the event.
- **Clwb Pontio / Transition Club** – During January through to March 2022, our Youth and Play Team worked closely with Ysgol Derwenfa. The team attended the school to encourage Welsh through play for several weeks. Following these sessions, a transition club has begun and 28 children from Year 5 and 6 have been attending weekly and this will encourage them to join the Youth Club when they reach eleven years of age.
- **Wellbeing And Music** – This project has concentrated on a group of 15 young people who have been struggling with their mental health and dealing with friendships. The young people have been supported to write a song on positivity and kindness.
- **Hungary Trip** – Following a successful funding application from Taith, the Urdd partnered with Flintshire Youth Services. In April 2023, 13 young people from disadvantaged backgrounds went on a fully funded trip to Hungary. The trip provided opportunities that these young people may never have had and boosted their confidence and independence skills.
- **More Than A Language** – The Welsh Language Officer has visited several schools to deliver engaging and interactive sessions on the benefits of bilingualism. The sessions consist of looking back at the history of Wales and the Welsh language, how it has evolved, and how important it is that we protect it. These sessions have been delivered to 550 young people.
- The team deliver accredited courses to young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, suffer with anxiety and / or find attending mainstream school challenging. The young people work towards Agored awards in cooking, housing, and homelessness. The sessions raise awareness of hidden homelessness, risk factors and what homelessness is. The sessions also include budgeting, tenancy sustainment and independent living sessions. Achieving Agored awards will help improve the chances of young people attending college or integrating back into school.
- The young people worked with a theatre group to produce an art piece and a film about what community means to them. In the community garden, young people were given the opportunity to grow their own produce and to work with other members of the community.

The young people also took part in volunteering opportunities in shops, offices and at Forest School. 7 young people took part in a Residential Course to improve their mental health and have also helped plan a summer music festival.

The Impact of the Progression Service on Children and Young People who are Potentially Not In Education, Employment Or Training (NEET)

- The Council's Progression Service has provided an extensive range of opportunities to help re-engage children and young people who have struggled to attend education, employment, or training.
- The team works in close collaboration with a number of services and providers and offers a range of activities to support the development of important skills, such as independent living.
- Children and young people are also able to access a range of accreditation in relevant vocational areas such as Hair & Beauty, Sport & Leisure, Food Hygiene and Construction.
- There has been a real community focus for some of the activities, including cooking for individuals who are homeless and the upcycling of furniture with participants, developing a greater awareness of the importance of community and an understanding of others who may be less fortunate than themselves.
- For a number of individuals, this intervention has been the key to enable them to leave the house and start to see an improvement in their mental health, with many now re-engaging with school or further/higher education. The intervention has also supported some of the young people not to self-harm and is having a positive impact on self-worth and wellbeing.

Education and Inclusion Service Collaboration with Speech and Language Colleagues In BCUHB

- The Communication and Language Advisory Support Service (CLASS) has worked collaboratively with speech and language colleagues in BCHUB to roll out an evidence-based intervention package to support all pupils aged 3 to 7 with delayed attention, language, and communication needs. This project has been a priority given the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's communication skills.
- 55 primary schools have engaged in the Early Language and Communication training and have accessed toolkits for free to support delivery of the intervention to learners. The provision is targeted at learners who have below average language skills, with 45% being identified as being significantly below.
- Impact data collated so far shows a pleasing level of improvement following the intervention with 35% of learners demonstrating age-appropriate language skills after following the 10-week programme and a reduction to 25% of those still presenting with a significant level of need, for whom, additional targeted provision will be made.
- Flintshire is the only Local Authority in Wales to offer training on this intervention to schools, while waiting for the Welsh Government intervention 'Talk with Me' to be published.

Improvement Areas

- Improving the levels of pupil attendance.
- Reducing pupil exclusions.

5.2 Portfolio: Housing and Communities

Strong Performance

- £330,024 of the Discretionary Housing Payment allocation and additional Government funding was used to support households with additional payments to assist with rent, due to the impact of the cost-of-living rising costs.
- More than 200 households were provided with specialist advice and support, including access to services such as the Discretionary Assistance Fund, Warm Wales, Dwr Cymru (Welsh Water), Housing Support Gateway, Free School Meals, and Uniforms.
- Received 59 responses to the Welsh Government questionnaire, which was in relation to the delivery of disabled facilities grants, with only one response with dissatisfied feedback.
- 59 medium adaptations were granted, whereas previous means testing methods, may have deemed individuals ineligible.
- 16 sheltered community centres and 35 local groups were supported to deliver Croeso Cynnes (Warm Welcome) from November 2022 to March 2023, allowing sheltered residents to enjoy a hot meal and drinks. 10,000 meals were provided, ensuring residents continued to eat well over the winter.
- Four meals on wheels road shows were completed to promote the Meals on Wheels service. These will be delivered to community centres weekly, whilst residents are attending activities.
- The Council has supported with the resettlement of 280 Ukrainians as part of the 'Home for Ukraine' UK scheme. This has been the 2nd highest move-on rate across the whole of Wales.
- During 2022/23, the Council has supported over 400 gypsy travellers across 16 sites within the County.
- The Benefits and Grants Assessment Team delivered several extra schemes and initiatives on behalf of Welsh Government, whilst continuing to deliver their main area of work, which includes processing over 2653 new claims for Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) and 48,165 change of circumstances for HB and CTRS.
- During 2022/23, the Council have awarded 3824 School Essentials Grants, 698 Free School Meetings claims, processed 1,606 applications for Blue Badges and answered over 26,000 telephone calls.
- Delivery of the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) received a 25% response rate, this was a higher-than-average response rate, in comparison to all other regions across Wales.
- The implementation of Dynamic Resourcing System (DRS) is in its pilot stages, which aims to deliver a more customer focused housing repairs function.
- Additional Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) funding was granted by the Welsh Government due to the Council exceeding targets of refurbishing long term voids properties – from c.£200,000 to over £500,000.
- Housing First continues to support 20 residents through its seven principles, including Principle 1 – People Have a Right to a Home.
- There continues to be a positive engagement when working on complex homelessness cases and this is achieved through embedding a multi-disciplinary and joint working approach.

Strong Stories

- Responded to the biggest legislative change in the housing sector in a generation, following implementation of Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016.
- There has been an increase in 'Welfare' referrals received, of 10% when compared with 2021/22.
- The Council have seen a successful delivery of a range of Welsh Government support schemes, this includes, Unpaid Carers, Winter Fuel, Energy Bills, Alternative Fuel and the extension to the School Essentials Grants.
- The Benefits and Grants Team exceeded their speed of processing target for HB and CTRS change of circumstances. The target was 8 days but achieved 6 days to process these claims.
- During 2022/23, 29 stair lifts were recycled, which has resulted in a cost saving of £20,000 to the Council.
- Over 4000 residents were supported through the delivery of Croeso Cynnes (Warm Welcome) and positive feedback was received from residents.
- The Council has been working collaboratively with North Wales Police and other partners to reduce anti-social behaviour in a specific area in Holywell.
- Delivery of Welsh Government's grant funded retrofit programme (ORP 2). The Council were successful in obtaining one of the highest amounts in Wales (£3m) and over 200 properties received major refurbishment, investment, and installation of energy efficiency measures, i.e., solar panels etc.
- Targets were exceeded for apprenticeships from the local area and delivered through the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) investment programme.
- A successful Housing Support Forum was delivered, and a dedicated 'Housing Hub' webpage is available on the Council's website and provides a wide range of information regarding housing.
- 2 larger (5 bed plus) homes have been acquired utilising Welsh Government funding of over £290k.
- £12.5 million of Welsh Government funding was secured for 100+ new social rented homes.

Improvement Areas

- To continue the delivery of the Voids Action Plan to improve voids performance.
- Commence thematic re-commissioning of Housing Support Grant projects, including Floating Support Services and Supported Housing Schemes.
- Purchase of the Dynamic Purchasing System in relation to the delivery of disabled facilities grants.
- Review the future of NEW Homes and provide recommendations to the NEW Homes Board and Cabinet.
- Increase pace of property acquisitions to increase the number of homes available and reduce pressure on services.

5.3 Portfolio: Governance

Strong Performance

- 'In-year' Council Tax collection levels for 2022/23 were 97.4% and despite the challenging economic climate and the rising costs-of-living impacting on the ability of some households to make payment of council tax on time, we still managed to maintain an upper quartile collection position compared to the national average.
- **Supporting people to use digital technology** – the Digital Flintshire Hub promotes a range of initiatives to help people to use digital technology now and in the future. The Digital Flintshire Hub includes resources to keep people safe online, training, health and wellbeing resources, digital events, and activities. The Digital Flintshire Hub also provides information about the Council's ambitious plans contained in the Digital Strategy.
- **Registration Service** – following the coronavirus pandemic and restrictions on getting married, the service has managed a high demand for marriage ceremonies over the last 12 months.

Strong Stories

- **Cost of living payments/grants** – working in partnership with Welsh Government, the Council prioritised the payment of the £150 cost-of-living grants to support residents with rising energy bills and household costs. Using technology, digital e-forms and data matching, payments were automated in many cases without residents needing to register for the payment and the grant scheme resulted in 53,000 payments being awarded quickly to the value of £7.9m. Overall, grant take-up rates of 98.4% in Flintshire were achieved, which was well above the national average of 95.9%.
- **National Data Bank** – free SIM cards and data vouchers are available from our Connects Centres to eligible residents. The free data has been provided by Virgin Media, O2, Vodafone and Three. The Connects Centres work with the Good Things Foundation, a charity helping people improve their lives through digital.

Improvement Areas

- **Collection of Housing Rent** - continues to remain challenging with the rise in costs-of-living and the impacts on tenants' ability to pay, especially as social tenants are typically less likely to have sufficient disposable income to cope with inflationary cost-of-living increases and this is having a direct impact on rent arrears.
- **Customer service standards and engagement** – both require a review and policy development to ensure our service offer is clear to residents. A review of customer service standards will also help us manage customer expectations.

5.4 Portfolio: Planning, Environment and Economy

Strong Performance

- Received 4,401 responses to the online town centre Place Making public consultation held in February 2023, relating to the towns of Buckley, Holywell and Shotton.
- The Council exceeded its decarbonisation targets in two of its key themes. Building's theme had a target of 9% reduction in CO2e emissions, and we saw an actual reduction of 13%. Mobility & Transport theme also had a 9% reduction target in CO2e emissions, and we saw an actual reduction of 16%. This is the result of many decarbonisation activities across the Council including reduction in unnecessary car journeys, energy efficiency measures in our buildings, and generation of energy from building-mounted solar and wind.
- 2022 saw the launch of our public Climate Change webpages and e-newsletter. The bi-monthly e-newsletter already has a readership of over 1000
- 46 large private commercial investors were supported, of which 6 large investments have reached the planning permissions stage.
- Delivered 63 confidential impartial coaching and mentoring sessions to commercial directors to encourage: - decision making relating to private sector inward investment and business expansion; act as a commercial critical friend and operational confidant regarding business operations.
- Delivered 22 business events and engaged with a total of 795 delegates. This included 5 x Deeside Decarbonisation Forum network events and engaged with 210 business delegates.
- A weekly average of 70 regular market street traders attend the markets at Mold (64) and Holywell (6). In addition, 60 casual traders were accommodated throughout the year around the towns.
- Mold indoor market has an average occupancy rate of 80% with regular enquiries to occupy the Market Hall.
- Delivered 146 business support sessions to 48 social enterprises within Flintshire.
- The Council supported 11 social enterprises through the business registration process.
- Delivered 4 social enterprise business network events during 2022/23.
- Supported 5 private sector enterprises to explore their Corporate Social Responsibility relating to supporting the social enterprise sector.
- Worked with a Social Enterprise Working Group consisting of 7 social enterprise leaders from within Flintshire to develop and pilot an innovative 'Social Impact Toolkit', which has identified £2,814,274.08 worth of social value through the activities of the seven participating social enterprises. On the back of this work, the Council was invited to speak at the National Social Return on Investment Conference in Manchester to share best practice.
- 43 micro and small rural businesses in North East Wales were supported by the Enterprise Renewal Fund to introduce new products and/or processes that they had not delivered before. A total value of £160,000 funding allocated in 2022/23.
- Delivered a North East Wales Heritage Showcase event which strengthened links between the heritage and tourism sector. In excess of 120 people attended the event with 19 exhibitors representing 22 groups and societies.

- Received very positive feedback from the Royal Welsh Show Committee about our presence as feature county (Clwyd: Denbighshire; Flintshire; Wrexham; Conwy) at the 2022 show (18th to 21st of July). We were supported by our local businesses who provided over 20 prizes to show attendees and with a very positive teamwork from the four local authorities. The North Wales Way was used as the theme to link all four of the counties.
- Delivered a series of 10 business networking events in collaboration with local tourism and hospitality groups and engaged a total in excess of 280 delegates.
- Supported organisers in hosting a successful return of the Mold Food and Drink Festival in September after a two-year break due to the pandemic. The festival weekend attracted over 10,000 people and excess of 100 exhibitors showcased their products – the majority being producers in North East Wales.
- Delivered a series of Familiarization trips to a variety of places across North East Wales. The trips were designed to highlight interesting and key destinations to local tourism businesses so that they can share the knowledge and encourage visitors to delve deeper into the local history, culture, landscapes, attractions, and hospitality venues. 60 businesses and 170 people in total attended the 6 trips.

Strong Stories

Place Making Plan Development:

- Engagement of community and businesses in Place Making Plans process. A mixture of methodologies has been used to engage and consult local people including digital consultation via an online web-based interactive survey and also face-to-face consultation events.
- Key consultation topics included: general usage and perceptions of town centres, reasons to visit and key barriers, identifying future needs and improvement opportunities, gathering perceptions about public safety, green spaces, travel, quality of offer and environment.
- Feedback and public perceptions will be used to inform way forward/ emerging priorities that will feed into the Place Making Plans. Additionally, a comprehensive review of statistics and data available per town (based on evidence of need along with local people's views and perceptions).
- Partnership working amongst stakeholders, including a range of the Council's portfolios and their services, North Wales Police, BCUHB, Town Councils, voluntary/ community sector organisations, Welsh Government, Design Commission for Wales.
- Opportunities to work more collaboratively across services internally and with external organisations have been realised through the Place Making work completed to date.
- Excellent feedback from Design Commission for Wales particularly regarding the approach used to developing Place Making Plans in Flintshire to date.
- The successful prosecution of a local business person for offences under Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations and Fraud Act. He was sentenced to 16 week custodial, suspended for 12 months, 150 hours unpaid work, £900 fine and ordered to pay £3209 costs.
- The Council has made significant progress in delivering its biodiversity duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The Access & Natural Environment Service, in

delivering the Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan 2020 – 2023, titled ‘Supporting Nature in Flintshire’, has achieved:

- Secured and delivered over £515k Welsh Government funding 2022/23 to realise biodiversity improvement
- Building strong cross portfolio connection to improve sites and management for biodiversity e.g., Streetscene, collect mowers and chemical free weed treatments
- Coordinated the first ever ‘Greener development’ conference hosted in Nov 22 with approx. 150 delegates
- Facilitated approximately 30 Council Members biodiversity training session in January 2023
- 3.9Ha wildflower sites created
- 3 town centre Green Infrastructure Masterplans developed
- Collaboration with 9 schools for biodiversity improvements
- Flintshire swift recovery project: a total of 126 nest chambers were erected, 16 on 5 school sites. Plus 110 nest chambers on all other buildings, including 4 on Holywell Town Council and 4 on Mold County Hall.
- Tree planting: 118 standard trees and 2482 whips (creating over 500m of new hedgerows) across 16 sites in Flintshire and set up monitoring programme.
- Total of 95 Green Infrastructure (GI) interventions with wildflower sites and tree sites combined
- Conservation grazing enabled at Bettisfield with installation of water system and improvements to fencing
- Greenfield Valley community growing space created
- 2 Ponds restored and 5 sites with improved habitat management

Improvement Areas

- Provides opportunities for individuals to move into employment, learning or volunteering opportunities
- Improving digital connectivity across the County for businesses and residents

5.5 Portfolio: Social Services

Strong Performance

- There are currently 34 Micro-carers delivering services in the county.
- The North Wales Community Equipment Service has responded to 100% of its requests for urgent equipment within the one-day national response standard and 100% of its requests within the 7-day response standard.
- 94% of equipment has been cleaned and reused.
- The Workforce Development Team delivered 407 training sessions, offering a total of 9,933 places to employees, carers, unpaid carers and volunteers working across Flintshire social care settings, including those in domiciliary care, the independent and voluntary sector. This was an increase of over 70 courses delivered compared to 2021/22 with almost treble the number of places being offered, reflecting the growth and movement across the sector.
- The number of Micro-carers has increased with an additional 11 people in setting up Micro-Enterprises in Flintshire this year, bringing the total number of Micro-Carers setup since the pilot launch to 34.

Strong Stories

- Children’s residential services have seen significant development, with its two small group homes opening and the completion of building work on two 4 bed properties, one of which has emergency accommodation.
- Work has progressed with the development of a new 56-bedroom residential care home in Flint, offering residential care of the highest quality with state-of-the-art facilities across 4 floors.
- Properties at Larchway, Sandycroft, and Glan y Morfa, Connah’s Quay have been refurbished to support people with physical disabilities. Flintshire now has three units available to support people in urgent need of accommodation.
- A new team, Discharge to Assess Reablement (DART), has been set up by Flintshire Social Services to support citizens in hospital and beyond. DART is the social care link between hospital and the community, and we aim to make the move as smooth as possible for people.
- In September 2022, Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) successfully delivered its third cohort of Parent Group Leader training.
- The Project SEARCH programme for adults over 25 was launched with 7 interns undertaking work placements.
- Next Steps ran their advanced volunteering program, with all learners completing the course and awarded with a Level 1 Certificate in Personal & Social Education.
- The Young Carers ID card has been launched and successfully working in partnership with young carers.
- The Autism Team have planned, delivered, and attended events to raise awareness and provide support to Autistic Individuals and their families.
- Over the past year Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) has grown from strength to strength. In September 2022 EPEC delivered their third cohort of Parent Group Leader training, with five parents completing the training and gaining their certification and Aged Accreditation.

- North Wales Integrated Autism Services (NWIAS) were successful in bidding for additional monies of £148,000 from the Welsh Government and have used this to purchase 120 assessments to reduce the waiting list to approximately 19 months, for new clients to the service requesting an autism assessment.

Improvement Areas

- Develop short term emergency accommodation for people who find themselves homeless or in need of accommodation urgently.
- Further improve the digital skills of our workforce.

5.6 Portfolio: Streetscene and Transportation

Strong Performance

- The service retained its ISO 9001, ISO 14,001 and ISO 45,001 management systems
- The service retained its Publicly Available Specification PAS100 and Quality protocol accreditation for the production of soil conditioner from household garden waste
- A funding application has been submitted to Welsh Government to increase repair and reuse of items that would be wasted
- The Service was successful in acquiring over £1.7m Welsh Government Grant funding for the progression of the following projects;
 - A5119 Northop to Flint route corridor treatment
 - Active Travel Core allocation - including Buckley Higher Common Path and Saltney / Broughton cycle path
 - Safe Routes in Communities – Six schools in Flint
 - National 20mph roll out
- The Council took the lead role in developing the required legal process enabling the successful implementation of Welsh Government forthcoming change in restricted road legislation across Wales.
- A total of 15 Dual Electric Vehicle (EV) within 8 council owned car parks enabling a maximum of 30 vehicles to charge at any one time have successfully been installed.
- The Council was successful in the re-procurement exercise of the school transport network.
- Successfully introduced an additional Fflecsi Service operating in the Buckley area of the County, with the Fflecsi service having 2 integrated school routes and a growing patronage.
- Continued to respond effectively to an increasing number of burials and requests for Public Health Funerals in excess of the previous annual averages.
- During 2022/23 the service procured, project managed and designed highway / infrastructure improvement works in excess of £5 million
- The Council has won an award for Street data at the 2023 Exemplar Awards, recognising the achievements during the last 12 months.

Strong Stories

- The compliance and training team have developed and implemented a number of inhouse training programmes for delivery to the workforce and staff. Commercial opportunities are also being explored to provide operational training sessions to the wider industry.
- PAS100 soil conditioner has been provided to residents and community groups within the county
- A revised vehicle permit policy was introduced on the household recycling centers (HRCs) to improve site operations and staff safety
- Through the Keep Wales Tidy Caru Cymru project, a number of community engagement and support events have taken place to reduce environmental crimes and improve the local environmental quality
- The Parc Adfer (regional waste to energy plant) education facility has welcomed a number of community groups to learn about the process and waste minimisation
- A portfolio communication standard has been introduced to improve internal communication

- The service has developed a Mental Health and Wellbeing Calendar aimed at promoting events that may assist employees with matters effecting their personal health and wellbeing, providing them with the knowledge and support required to seek effective help and advice. A number of events have successfully been undertaken to date.
- The service responded to two significant snow events this season, which saw severe disruption to the highway network resulting in widespread school closures. On the 14th January 2023 snow fell and was present for over 10 days. Winter maintenance operations were working 24hrs a day throughout the whole event. 29 turnouts covering over 16,000 km, spreading 1940 tons of salt, were completed. Resources were redeployed to assist with hand treating highstreets, carpark and cemeteries. Over 350 tons of salt was used in hand salting and replenishing salt bins and salt piles. On the 6th March 2023 snow fell and was present for 6 days. We completed 18 turnouts covering over 10,000km in 6 days. 24hrs a day operations spreading 1032 tons of salt through the gritters. 100 tons of salt was spread by hand treating highstreets, carpark and cemeteries
- The service is implementing the National 20mph roll-out scheme following the Welsh Government's change in legislation. This will be one of the biggest, single projects within Wales to have a positive effect on road safety.
- The service has progressed the counties Consolidated Speed Limit Order following a 7 year speed limit review project.
- Bereavement Services won the APSE Performance Network Award for Most Improved Cemetery Service which looks at continual service improvement over a 3 year period
- A fully digital and cloud based Cemetery Management System, has now gone live and which includes fully interactive digital Cemetery Plans. Additionally, we continue to progress a number of cemetery expansion projects as well as exploring the options to expand the counties existing suite of burial services.

Improvement Areas

- 2022/23 saw a continued downturn in the Councils recycling performance due to an increase in the amount of black sack residual waste being collected from residential properties resulting in potential financial penalties and therefore, need to consider areas of improvement.
- Over the next 12 months The Integrated Transport unit will be focusing on contractor compliance.

5.7 Portfolio: Chief Executives

Strong Performance

- The Council Plan target for the pounds of social value generated was achieved and surpassed within the first six months of the year (with over £3m of social value generated within the first six months of 2022/23, against the annual target of £2.4m).
- The number of working days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employees lost due to sickness absence has improved when compared to 2021/22.
- There were 77,677 payments processed during 2022/23 Payroll with 99.25% accuracy.
- Successfully setting the Revenue, Capital and HRA budgets within statutory deadlines and despite the challenging financial climate.
- 342 Insurance claims settled in year of which 203 (59.36%) were settled at nil cost to the Council.
- 100% of planned efficiencies achieved on the approved revenue budget, exceeding the target of 95%.

Strong Stories

- There was good performance in generating social value from the Council's commissioning and procurement activities during 2022/23, with 90% of the target for the number of contracts supported to include social value achieved in the first six months of the year.
- The Council worked with partner organisations under the Public Services Board (PSB) to ensure a new local Well-being Assessment was published early in 2022/23, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, with this informing further work in year to develop a new Well-being Plan for 2023-28.
- Collaborative decision with partners to form a Joint Public Services Board (PSB) covering both Flintshire and Wrexham local authority areas (with the Flintshire and Wrexham PSB now replacing the two former PSBs - Flintshire PSB and Wrexham PSB).
- A number of applicants were considered for apprenticeships at the Council. A total of 26 apprentices across 14 disciplines were appointed and commenced work in September 2022.
- There was an increased attendance on the 'Coaching Skills for Managers' course over the year
- An increase in the attendance of managers and employees at a range of awareness training sessions, including stress awareness and mindfulness.
- A significant amount of policy to practice training was provided to support the roll out of our new Disciplinary Policy and amended Attendance Management Policy, as follows:
 - 7 Briefing Sessions on the new disciplinary policy with 109 managers participating
 - 5 full day training sessions resulting in 61 trained Investigating Officers
 - 3 training sessions resulting in 23 trained Authorised Officers
 - 2 case administration sessions where we have trained 10 administrators on how to support a disciplinary policy
 - 7 Attendance Management sessions where we have trained 87 managers and supervisors on the policy
- Formal commencement of the process of replacing the Council's Financial Information System.

- The Council successfully delivered £16m of direct financial help in 2022/23 for areas such as self-isolation payments, statutory sick pay enhancement, free school meals direct payments and winter fuel payments which were met from Welsh Government funding.

Improvement Areas







- The corporate target for agency expenditure for 2022/23 was exceeded, in part, due the number of vacancies being carried in a number of front-line services who need additional resources to maintain service delivery.
- Whilst there has been an improvement when compared to 2021/22 the corporate target for days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) was not achieved by all portfolios.
- The variance between the budget at outturn and the budget set was 0.9% which is higher than the 0.5% target. The service aims to do further work with portfolios to minimise this over the next financial year.
- The actual amount of invoices paid within 32 days was 94.3% which is marginally less than the target of 95%. Further work will be done with portfolios to improve this over the next financial year.

6. Council Plan Progress – Infographic of RAGs

6.1 Assessment of Our Performance

The table below provides an overview of progress against Council Plan Key Performance Indicators. For more detailed information please refer to the End of Year Monitoring Report.

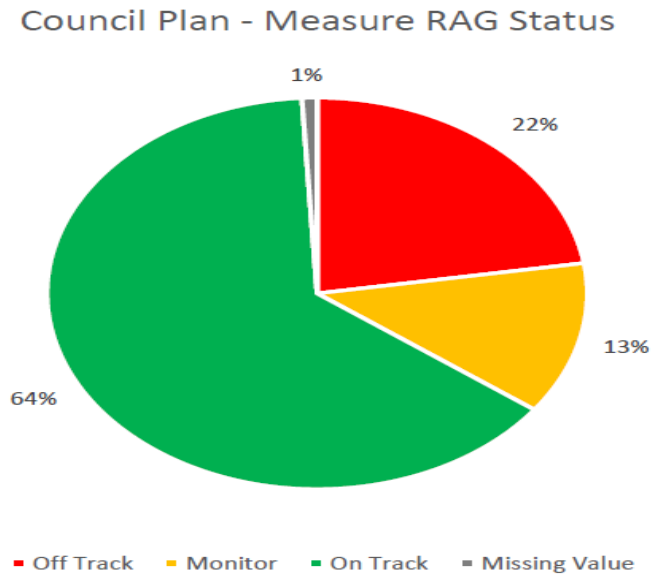
The key below defines the Red / Amber / Green (RAG) for measures contained in the End of Year Monitoring Report.

<u>Performance Status Key</u>		<u>Trend Status Key</u>	
	Limited Progress - delay in scheduled activity; not on track		Downturned – In comparison to the previous year’s data, the performance outturn has reduced
	Satisfactory Progress - some delay in scheduled activity, but broadly on track		Maintained – In comparison to the previous year’s data, performance is the same as last year
	Good Progress - activities completed on schedule, on track		Improved - In comparison to the previous year’s data, performance has increased

6.2 Council Plan Performance Summary 2022/23

Performance for 2022/23 against our Council Plan Measures is summarised in the chart below.

Chart 1a: Council Plan Performance Measures 2022/23



In summary our overall progress against the measures are;

- 71 (64%) indicators/measures achieved the target or better compared to 73% in 2021/22
- 14 (13%) indicators/measures are being monitored compared to 9% in 2021/22
- 25 (22%) indicators/measures missed target compared to 18% in 2021/22
- 1 (1%) measure have not been fully updated for End of Year (Q4) *

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we are unable to report against 1 of the measures for 2022/23

Chart 1b: Comparison of Performance RAG Status for Council Plan Measures - 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23

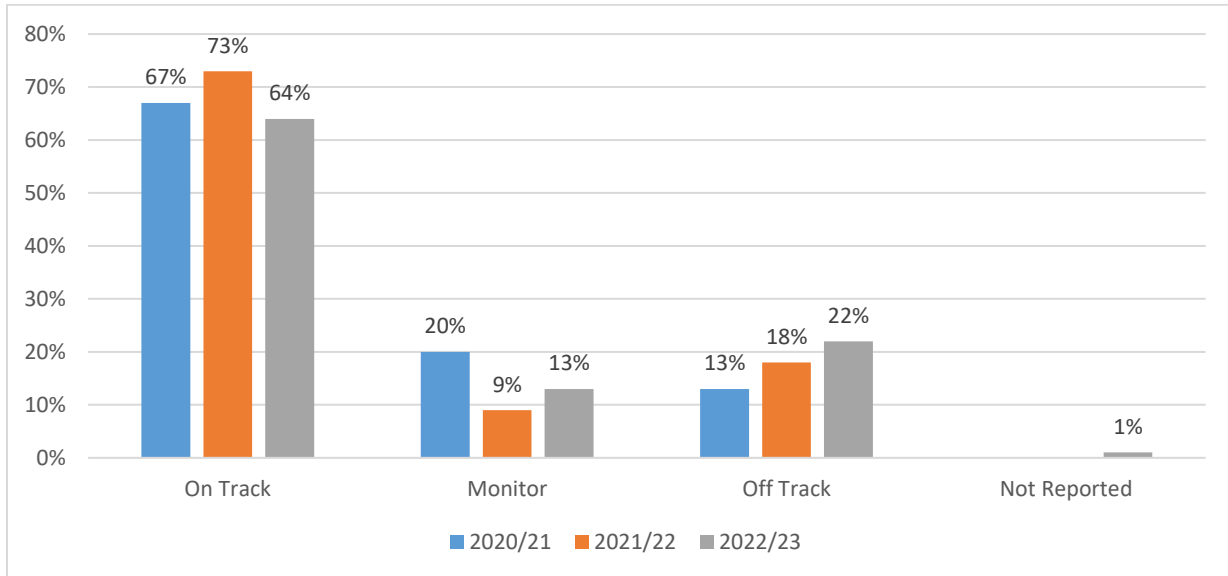
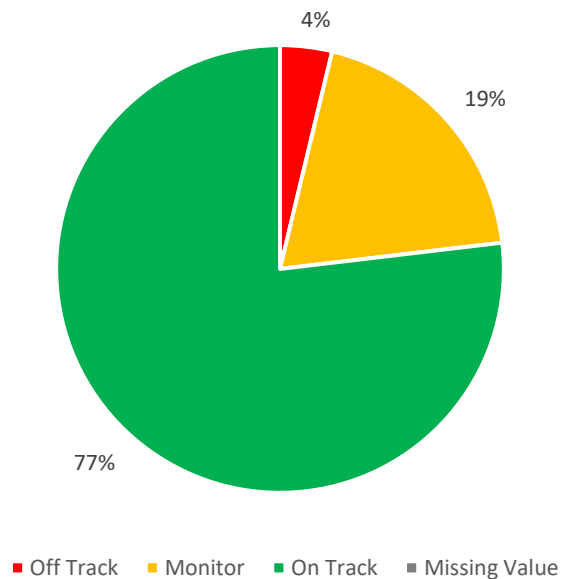


Chart 2a: Council Plan Action RAG Status 2022/23

Council Plan - Action RAG Status



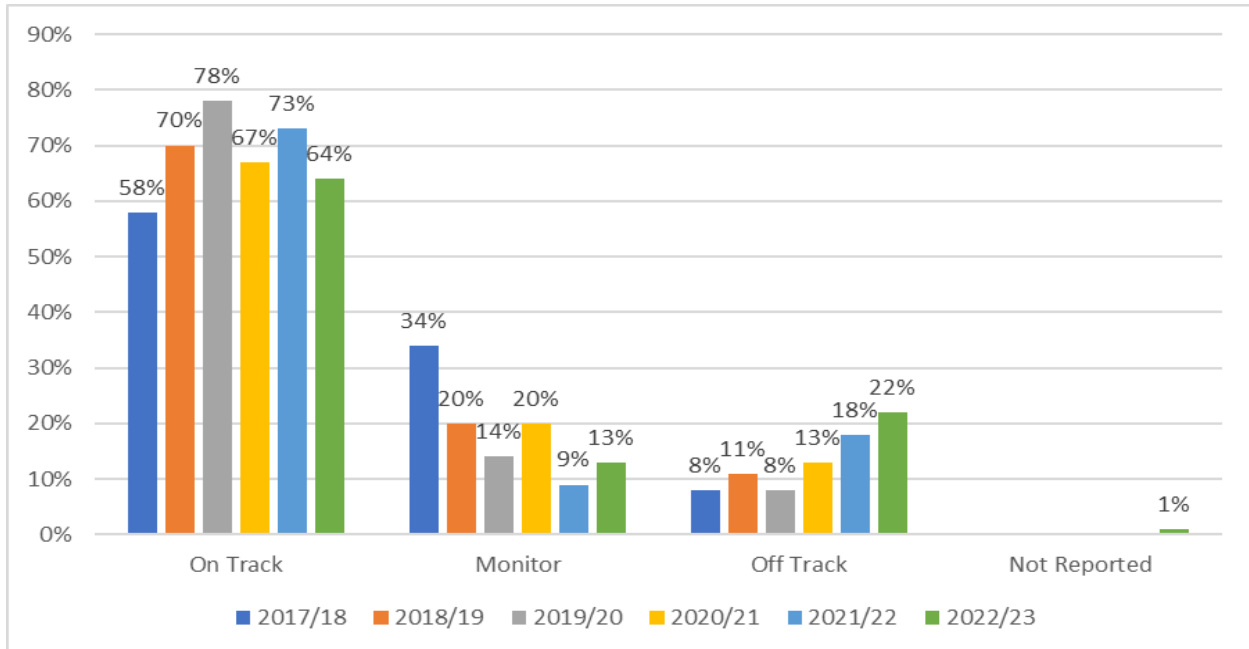
In summary our overall progress against the actions are;

- Good (green) progress was achieved in 77% (123) of activities
- Satisfactory (amber) progress was achieved in 19% (31) of activities
- Limited (red) progress was made in 4% (6) of activities

6.3 Council Plan Performance Data Summary

The table below demonstrates a comparison of performance data from 2017/18 through to 2022/23.

Chart 3: Percentage of Council Plan Measures Against Target - 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23



7. Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - Five Ways of Working

The following case studies are just a few examples of positive performance during 2022/23 and demonstrate how the Council considered the five ways of working.

Case Study 1: Implementation of Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points in Council Owned Car Parks



In October 2018, Cabinet approved the Councils strategy to adopt the role of an ‘enabler’ to facilitate the implementation of electric vehicle (EV) charging points rather than assuming the role of a direct provider. Due to the technological risks associated with this fast-moving sector, this approach eliminated the risk of the County being burdened with outdated / superseded infrastructure whilst also facilitating the Council to enter into long term lease agreement with specific suppliers providing long term income potential.

Following the successful award of grant funding through Cadwyn Clywyd, the Council commissioned a feasibility study to identify the most suitable locations across the County for the implementation of publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure taking into consideration key criteria such as business need and financial viability.

Upon completion of the above study and following identification of the Councils immediate priority sites, the Council were successful in obtaining ‘On-Street Residential Charge-point Scheme’ (ORCS) funding, which enabled the installation of 15 Dual EV chargers to be successfully installed at the following 8 locations in January of this year (2023).

Site	Location Type	Charger Specification
Griffiths Square, Mold	Residential / Town Centre	Fast chargers have been utilised within these locations due to the predicted nature of usage. *The installation of x15 Dual EV chargers enables a maximum of 30 vehicles to charge at any one time.
Richard Heights, Flint	Residential / Town Centre	
Castle Street, Flint	Tourism / Residential / Leisure	
Allt Goch, Flint	Residential / Town Centre	
Pierce Street, Queensferry	Local Centre	
Tower Gardens, Holywell	Public / Local Centre	
Precinct Way, Buckley	Local Centre	
Pavilion Leisure Centre, Flint	Leisure Centre / Local Centre	

As required under the ORCS Scheme, residents have 24/7 unrestricted access to all car park locations to enable them to charge their electric vehicles both during the day and overnight. The EV charging bays satisfy the requirements of disabled users and are marked and signed bilingually. Car Park Legal Orders have also been amended to reflect the implementation EV charging bays and can be enforced effectively by the Councils Enforcement Officers.

The aim of this project is to kick-start the development of the counties EV charging network whilst also stimulating Private Sector investment (as defined within the authority's approved strategy to act as an 'enabler'). The implementation of charge-points not only provides the county with much needed infrastructure but will also serve as the catalyst required to increase local confidence, thus providing a much-needed boost to EV ownership across the region.

Long Term

Implementation of the Councils first phase of EV chargers will facilitate the behavioural change required for residents to switch to more environmentally friendly and sustainable modes of transport. The visual presence of infrastructure will have a positive effect on public awareness and display the authority's outward commitment to climate change and future vision for a zero-carbon future as defined within Central and Welsh Government legislation.

The move to low carbon transport options aligns itself with the long-term aspirations of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016, The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and The Air Quality Standards (Wales) Regulations 2010. The concept is also strongly endorsed within the Council Plan under the priority of a 'Green Council', for which is reinforced by the Council's approach to integrated and sustainable transport.

Prevention

Expansion of the Counties EV charging network will reinforce the Council's commitment to climate change whilst also facilitating a vision for a zero-carbon future as defined within Welsh Government legislation. Implementation of the required infrastructure will also boost the Council's status as a 'key player' within the region, thus reducing the risk of public abandonment in terms of tourism, residential and business growth.

The adoption of electric vehicles for use on the highway network has obvious benefits to air quality through the reduction of Co2 emissions. Improved air quality will benefit the Council's most deprived communities, who often reside within the counties most densely populated areas. This will also greatly assist the Council to achieve decarbonisation targets set within Central and Welsh Government legislation.

Integration

The adoption of electric vehicles is key to the success of a sustainable, integrated transport network and will form an integral element of the Councils forthcoming review of its integrated transport strategy whilst also contributing to the pan Wales EV charging network.

Whilst a regional strategy has yet to be developed, it is hoped that the implementation of the above project will facilitate the development of a future joint procurement framework, in order

to standardise the provision of charging infrastructure, operating models and maintenance, thus enabling a collaborative, and regional approach to the network of charge points across North Wales.

Not only does a regional approach recognise the relationship between cross-border travel movements and sustainability of local economies, it would also have the advantage of injecting a much needed element of consistency and availability of charging infrastructure. Should a standardisation of the region's EV charging network be achieved, there is no doubt that this will be the catalyst required to increase local confidence, thus providing a much-needed boost to EV ownership across the region.

Collaboration

To accommodate both existing and forecasted demands for EV's and the associated charging infrastructure, Flintshire County Council have been working in collaboration with Welsh Government (WG), neighbouring authorities and specialist consultants.

The Councils overarching EV strategy recognises and supports the importance of collaboration with the Private Sector (as defined within the authority's approved strategy to act as an 'enabler'). It also recognises the importance of strategic cross-border movements to the local economy in terms of commuter movements, business and tourism.

The Council have also developed a collaborative relationship with key industry stakeholders. The recently implemented infrastructure has been registered on the national charge-point registry and other live status maps such as Zap-Map where users can view the availability of the charging points.

The recently implemented scheme was 25% match funded by Flintshire County Council.

Involvement

Completion of studies thus far demonstrates the Council's engagement with key stakeholders both cross border and within Welsh Government.

Representing local members were involved throughout the duration of the project and have been instrumental in raising both awareness and the requirements of their local communities.

Forming part of the ORCS grant application, Flintshire County Council have developed an information gathering questionnaire which will be sent to the effected communities in order to inform further expansion of the Councils EV network.

A section on the Flintshire County Council website has also been developed to raise the awareness of the charge points and to promote their use for residents and the public. Please see link below for more information.

<https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Streetscene/Introduction-of-Electric-Vehicle-EV-Charging-Infrastructure.aspx>

Case Study 2: New Grass Cutting Policy that Promotes Biodiversity

Grass cutting is an important aspect of maintaining public spaces, but traditional grass cutting methods can have negative impacts on the environment and biodiversity. The new policy adopted by Flintshire County Council takes a more sustainable approach to grass cutting that aims to support nature and the well-being of local communities.

The new policy considers reducing the frequency of grass cutting, leaving areas of grass uncut to allow wildflowers to grow and support biodiversity, whilst being considerate to highway safety. These approaches not only help to support biodiversity but can also provide benefits for local communities, such as improving the aesthetic appeal of public spaces, reducing noise and air pollution, and providing opportunities for people to connect with nature.

A reduction in the usage of glyphosate-based herbicide, which is frequently used to treat weeds but is categorised as "Probably carcinogenic" by the World Health Organisation, was also authorised by the council in addition to a move to manage grasslands.

Flintshire County Council has already invested grant funding in a Foamstream system that uses heated foam containing plant starches to control weeds from the Welsh Government Local Places for Nature fund. Flintshire County Council is now considering alternative methods to glyphosate use and looking at choices that are better for the community's residents and the environment. To develop a more diversified grassland asset, the improvements include establishing wildflower spaces and areas of limited mowing, backed by Welsh Government grant funds. This policy is a fantastic illustration of the kind of initiative local governments may take to improve sustainability and community well-being.

The strategy now includes measures to promote nature in each of the places it addresses, such as public open spaces and roadside verges, giving priority to road-user safety and making sure sites seem purposeful by using mowed boundaries, pathways, and when appropriate, signs.

This action is a crucial step towards establishing substantial habitats across the county, supporting essential pollinators and a healthy natural environment, which is critical for the wellbeing of communities given that just 2% of typical grassland habitats remain in the UK.

Overall, the new grass cutting policy adopted by Flintshire County Council is a step in the right direction towards encouraging sustainability and community well-being. It highlights how local governments may act in a realistic way to protect biodiversity and enhance community wellbeing while also preserving public spaces for their intended use.

Long Term

By taking a more sustainable approach to grass cutting, the council can contribute to a healthier and more resilient environment, support biodiversity, and enhance the well-being of local communities by leaving areas of grass uncut or reducing the frequency of grass cutting can allow wildflowers to grow, providing food and habitats for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. This,

in turn, supports the wider ecosystem, contributing to a healthier and more resilient environment.

By allowing wildflowers to grow and reducing the frequency of grass cutting, public spaces can become more visually appealing, contributing to a more pleasant and attractive environment for local communities into the future.

Connecting with nature has been shown to have positive effects on mental health and well-being. By promoting biodiversity and providing opportunities for people to connect with nature, the new grass cutting policy can contribute to the long-term well-being of local communities.

Prevention

Traditionally, grass cutting has been done frequently to maintain a neat appearance of public spaces, but this approach has negative impacts on the environment and biodiversity. Over time, the loss of habitats and food sources due to regular mowing can have a significant impact on the populations of pollinators such as bees and butterflies, which can in turn affect the wider ecosystem. By reducing the frequency of grass cutting and leaving areas uncut, the new policy aims to prevent the decline in biodiversity and the problems associated with it, rather than simply treating the symptoms by planting wildflowers or installing beehives in already degraded areas. In this way, the new grass cutting policy adopts a preventative approach, by aiming to address the underlying causes of the problem rather than simply responding to the symptoms. By promoting biodiversity, the policy helps to maintain a healthy and resilient ecosystem and contributes to a sustainable future for the local community.

Integration

The policy promotes an integrated approach by considering the well-being of future generations and considering the long-term impacts of the council's actions on the environment, economy, society, and culture. The policy aims to support biodiversity and create habitats for wildlife, which can have a positive impact on the local environment and also provide opportunities for educational and cultural activities.

The policy is designed to be integrated with other policies and strategies, such as the council's climate change strategy and by aligning with these wider strategies, the policy aims to support the achievement of broader sustainability commitments and to ensure that actions taken in one area do not have negative impacts on others.

Collaboration

The policy involved collaboration between different stakeholders, including the council members, local communities, Welsh Government, cross-portfolio colleagues and environmental organisations and suppliers.

The development of the new policy involved consultation and collaboration with local communities and environmental organisations, to understand their needs and concerns and to ensure that the policy was developed with their input. This collaboration helps to ensure that the policy is aligned with the needs and values of the local community and has their support.

Additionally, the policy itself promotes collaboration by encouraging local communities to take an active role in the maintenance and management of public spaces. For example, the policy may involve working with community groups to identify areas that could benefit from reduced grass cutting and to monitor the success of the new approach. This collaboration helps to build stronger relationships between the council and local communities and can also help to empower local communities to take ownership of the public spaces in their area.

Involvement

The policy can have a positive impact on the well-being of the local community by providing opportunities for people of all ages and diversity to connect with nature and to engage in outdoor activities. By creating more natural and biodiverse public spaces, the policy encourages people to spend time outdoors and can help to promote physical and mental well-being.

Case Study 3: Development of Town Centre Place Making Plans

Short Overview of Project

Welsh Government (WG) has recently outlined its strategic direction and approach for Place Making* across Wales. As part of this, WG has asked each local authority across Wales to develop 'Place Making Plans' to set out how they will identify, plan and deliver Place Making in each of their towns. WG has confirmed that having up to date Place Making Plans will be a condition to accessing grant funding for regeneration in the future.

In response to this, the Council's Regeneration Team has developed an approach to engage and consult local people and bringing together key partners and stakeholders to develop and later implement local town centre Place Making Plans. This case study relates to progress to date with the first three of seven plans to be produced for town centres across Flintshire: Buckley, Holywell and Shotton.

**Place Making can be defined as a process which involves working collaboratively across sectors and disciplines to comprehensively consider the future development of a place, and if done successfully can result in the place becoming more aligned to the needs of the local population and more vibrant.*

Engaging and Consulting Local People

It is important that local people are able to be involved in shaping the emerging Place Making Plans for their town centres, and in order to capture their views and opinions, an interactive online consultation was launched in addition to face-to-face open door public consultation events being delivered.

Over 4400 local people participated in the online consultations which was operated via a website named 'Give My View' via partnership between Flintshire County Council and a company named Built-ID. A social media campaign was run to encourage local people within the vicinity of the town centres to participate in the online consultation, which was live for 17 days earlier in 2023. A significant amount of information was gathered through the online consultation, and in addition, over 130 people attended the face-to-face events to be involved in the consultation process. The local knowledge and perceptions gathered along with data and statistical information which was also gathered for each town has begun to steer the focus of our Place Making Plans and what activity is needed in our towns in the future.

Information about Place Making was made available to the public via social media, at face-to-face events and also online via the council's website: <https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Business/Town-Centre-Regeneration/What-we-are-currently-working-on/Place-Making-in-Flintshire.aspx>

Long term vision / approach

Flintshire's Place Making approach is closely aligned to WG's 'Town Centre First' strategic approach which was launched in 2020, which aims over a medium to long-term period (10-15 years) to locate services and buildings in town centres to help breathe new life into town centre

across Wales. This is essential in the wake of the covid-19 pandemic, declining retail sales and changes in the way town centres are used. Like most towns in the UK, Flintshire has experienced a loss of key retailers from our town centres and a general decline in the quality of what is on offer in our town centres.

The aim of the emerging Place Making Plans for town centres in Flintshire is to identify priorities and actions that are able to be addressed in the short term (within the next few years) in addition to establishing medium to longer term vision and steps to achieve this.

Prevention

The emerging place making plans aim to prevent further decline of the town centres in Flintshire – particularly issues such as declining footfall and the number of run down and vacant premises, in addition to the loss of retail businesses. Local people and key stakeholder's views and needs are being used to inform what is needed in the future to bring about positive change and create vibrancy in town centres across Flintshire. The delivery of plans to prevent the further decline of the towns is a collaborative approach involving lots of partners and stakeholders.

Integration

WG expects local authorities and their partners to put the health and vibrancy of town centres at the heart of their policies and decision making, as part of their strategic decision making and delivery of services at an operational level. The emerging Place Making Plans for Flintshire therefore play an integral part in ensuring place making activity is sustainable and well-integrated as an approach within the Council but also within the work of our partners and key stakeholders.

Collaboration

The development of Place Making Plans in Flintshire has created an excellent opportunity to work more collaboratively not just across services within the council, but also with key partners from other public, private and community sectors. Strategic and operationally focussed groups of stakeholders responsible for 'place' and 'people' based services now meet regularly to consider data, public consultation findings and the outcomes of technical reports to steer and contribute towards the development of Place Making Plans and take ownership for their implementation in the future. There is a real buzz amongst stakeholders involved who feel this approach is beneficial to them in their roles, and most importantly to current and future generations.

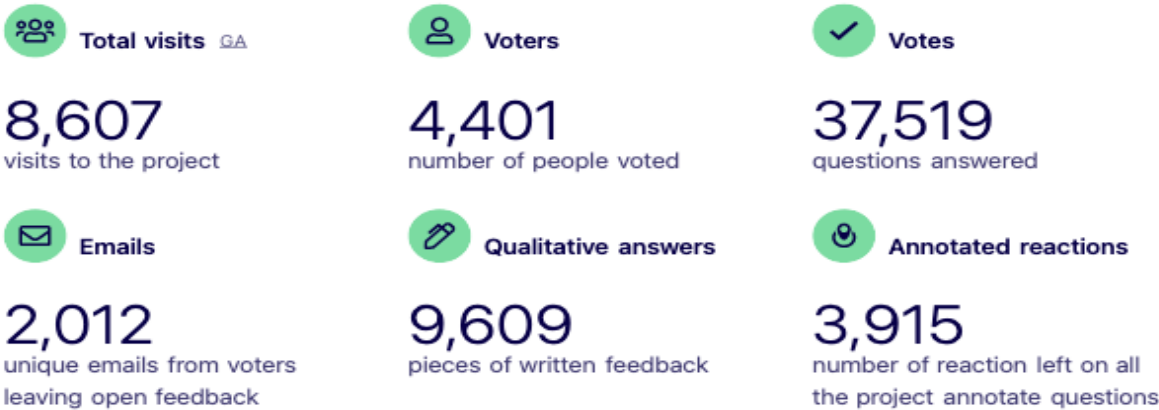
Involvement

The level of involvement and engagement from the public and key stakeholders during the development of the Place Making Plans for Buckley, Holywell and Shotton has been overwhelming, in fact more than three times the amount of people we anticipated would respond to the Place Making consultation. Over 1500 local people provided their contact details when completing the online consultation, wishing to be kept informed of progress and the outcome of the Place Making Plan work and the place making journey we've embarked upon. It is important that our emerging Place Making Plans are dynamic working documents that reflect the needs of our communities who have clearly taken an interest already in shaping the future of our town centres.

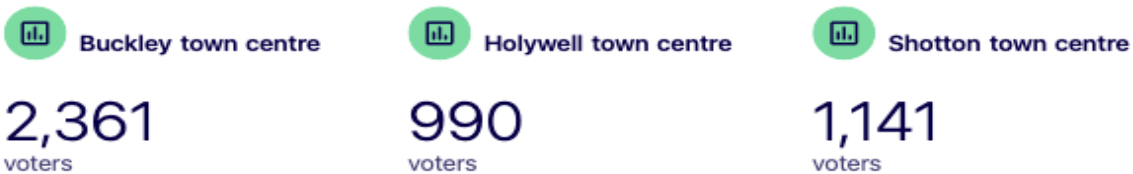
Image 1: Summary of Responses From Online Consultation Relating to Buckley, Holywell and Shotton which was Completed in February 2023

 **Final results: Flintshire's place making plan**
19/12/2022 – 13/02/2023

Users



Surveys



Segmentation

What is your relationship to Flintshire?



Image 2: Two of the Place Making Banners Llyon Display at the Public Face To Face Consultation Event



Case Study 4: Early Years and Family Services Speech, Language and Communication Support



Roll out of the Talkboost training allows school staff to be better equipped to support children’s speech and language development.

Talk Boost is a targeted intervention for children who need help with talking and understanding words to boost their language skills to narrow the gap between them and their peers.

Currently 86% of Flintshire schools are trained in the Talk Boost programmes. Therefore, moving forward into the next reporting period, the focus is going to be on the implementation of the programmes, ensuring staff feel equipped and confident to run the interventions with children in school and are sharing the data with the Trainers, the Speech and Language Therapy Technical Instructor and the Learning Advisor – Speech, Language and Communication, to ensure measurement and impact of the Talkboost programme.

Collaboration

Collaboration between Flintshire’s Early Years Integration and Transformation Programme and Flintshire Local Education Authority - The collaborative work between the Early Years Integration and Transformation team and the Local Education Authority has ensured the successful planning and delivery of the Talkboost Programme, as well as offering ongoing support to those schools implementing the intervention. The knowledge of early years, speech and language and education from both trainers has bolstered the project as well as helping to build and sustain good working relationships with school staff.

Integration

Adopting a collaborative approach to the delivery of the Talkboost Programme has ensured a consistent model of delivery with all primary schools being targeted and encouraged to take up the free training.

The trainers have worked hard to ensure the Talkboost programme is embedded into the school's offer to children to ensure children's speech and language development needs are supported as early as possible to help:

- Narrow the gap, allowing children to catch up with their peers
- Track Pupils progress

Involvement

By training a mix of Teachers and Teaching Assistants the Council are ensuring that school staff have access to knowledge and resources that enable them to provide additional speech and language support for all children who require it. As well as ensuring that all school staff have this additional training resource to build on their skills and knowledge. Enabling children from all backgrounds to access early support to enable them to catch up to their peers and have the best start in life, mitigating longer term problems relating to speech and language delay.

Long Term

In the short term, this process does require an investment in time from schools and partners, as well as funding to deliver the training, however the funding is currently being provided by the Early Years Integration and Transformation programme.

This investment will reinforce skills and processes over time to develop an effective intervention as required for children entering the educational system.

The longer-term impact will see improved speech and language skills in children, a higher standard of education achieved at the end of Primary school, an increase in social skills and interactions which in turn will benefit those children into adulthood allowing better opportunities for social relationships and job prospects, particularly for males, a reduction in mental health disorders and reductions in the Youth Justice system.

Prevention

Providing this training to schools and partners who work with younger children allows for a greater opportunity to make the appropriate interventions through identifying the support needed as early as possible and increasing the likelihood of all children reaching their potential in the future.

8. Equality

During the past 12 months the Council has signed up to Victim Support’s Hate Crime Charter, making a commitment to listen to victims of hate crime and support them to report concerns. We have extended the range of equality related courses available to employees, including offering unconscious bias training and neuro diversity awareness training.

We have reviewed Welsh Government’s Anti-racist Wales action plan to identify actions for the Council. These will be incorporated within our new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28. Some services have now started to review their equality data to review any disproportionality and unequal outcomes for people with protected characteristics and take action to address any identified inequalities.

We have continued to participate in awareness events and days such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History month, Hate Crime awareness week and Holocaust Memorial Day.

9. Welsh Language

We are pleased to report that we have continued to support Menter Iaith Fflint a Wrecsam to celebrate Dydd Gŵyl Dewi and promote and share our Welsh heritage. Activity packs were provided to all care homes in the county, including to those within the independent sector, supporting older people to participate in the celebrations.

We are very proud of the achievements of students from Ysgol Maes Garmon, The Council’s Integrated Youth Provision (IYP) teamed up with a group of young people from Ysgol Maes Garmon for a pilot project called ‘Cân a Lles’ (“Song and Well-being”). The project was led by singer songwriter Tom Collins, who supported the students to write, compose and record their own song. The song Dal i Ddod (Still to Come), mirrored the students’ experience of the pandemic, the good and the bad. This recording became one of the songs played on the Council’s IT Help Desk, hold-line.

We received six complaints about non-compliance with the Welsh language standards. We are now putting in place actions to ensure these do not happen again. We have continued to make progress complying with the Welsh language standards, however, there have been some challenges with recruitment, in particular, the recruitment of Welsh speakers to some public facing posts. This impacts on the Council’s capacity to deliver bilingual services. We are pleased to report that the Contact Centre has successfully increased the number of Welsh speaking team members. Services complete annual self-assessments against the standards to help identify areas for improvement and we will continue to do this during 2023/24.

10. Partnership and Collaboration Activity

Flintshire has a longstanding and proud track record of partnership working. The communities it serves rightly expect the statutory and third sector partners to work together to manage shared priorities through collaboration. The Flintshire Public Services Board is at the heart of promoting a positive culture of working together, setting shared priorities, and combining resources for the benefit of Flintshire, with an overall aim of improving local well-being.

The Flintshire Public Services Board was formally established in April 2016 following the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 coming into effect. Realising the common challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Flintshire Public Services Board and Wrexham Public Services Board began working together in 2020, sharing knowledge and resource, with a focus on community resilience.

Building on the success of collaborative working formed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Flintshire Public Services Board and Wrexham Public Services Board formally merged and in January 2023 the Flintshire and Wrexham Public Services Board was formed.

Membership of the Flintshire and Wrexham Public Services Board includes Natural Resources Wales, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Flintshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, Association of Voluntary Organisations Wrexham, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, Coleg Cambria, DWP, North Wales Police, Wrexham Glyndwr University and Welsh Government.

The Flintshire and Wrexham Public Services Board is working with its communities to change how we do things, to make sure we will be able to face the challenges ahead such as the climate and nature emergency, and how we ensure good mental health and wellbeing for all.

A key focus for the Flintshire and Wrexham Public Service Board has been the development of a new five-year Well-being Plan, drawing on the findings of the Well-being Assessments produced in 2022. The Flintshire and Wrexham Public Services Board Well-Being Plan 2023 - 2028 has just been finalised and approved and contains two-well-being objectives for the Public Services Board over the coming five years:

- Building flourishing communities by reducing inequalities across environment, education, employment, income, and housing.
- Improve community well-being by enabling people of all ages to live safe, healthy, and independent lives.

Under these objectives are several outcomes, which fall under three themes: Children and Young People, Our Communities, and Where We Work.

The Well-being Plan 2023 – 2028 will shape the work of the Public Services Board over coming years and there will be close working with other Public Services Boards across North Wales, along with local communities.

11. Risk Management

All Council Plans, business as usual and emerging risks are identified, assessed, treated and monitored using the Council's Risk Management Framework. Risks are identified using qualitative (milestones & actions) and quantitative (performance indicators, financial) data. Now we have found ourselves out of the Covid-19 Pandemic the recovery approach is no longer required and, in some areas, has become 'business as usual'. However, risk identification is and remains a key priority for the Council. It is a continuous process which is embedded in not only our day to day (business as usual) but embedded within our Council Planning, Portfolio Business Planning, Project Management, and Partnerships (short term, medium term and long term).

12. Regulation, Audit and Inspection

The Council is regulated by organisations throughout the year. These include, amongst others, Audit Wales (AW), Estyn for Education and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

The Annual Audit Summary sets out the audit and regulatory work completed by Audit Wales of Flintshire County Council since the last annual report which was published in January 2022. Overall, the Auditor General for Wales has reached a positive conclusion. *"The Auditor General certified that the Council had met its remaining Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 duties for the financial year 2021-22, as saved by an order made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021"*. No formal recommendations have been made during the year.

13. Corporate Health and Safety

The Council is committed to its duties and responsibilities as an employer for health and safety. The management of workplaces that are safe to the health of all Council employees, sub-contractors, stakeholders and members of the public sits alongside our strategic priorities as our most important obligation. We take appropriate steps to seek to protect the health, safety and well-being of all our service users, visitors and employees in everything we do.

14. Additional Background Information (Available upon Request)

There are a number of related documents which support this Annual Performance Report. These documents are available upon request:

- Council Plan 2022/23 – Part 2
- Council Plan End of Year Performance Monitoring Report 2022/23
- Flintshire Social Services Annual Performance Report 2022/23
- Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2022/23
- Annual Strategic Equality Plan Report

15. Feedback and How to Obtain Further Information

Thank you for reading our Annual Performance Report for 2022/23.

Your views and suggestions about how we might improve the content and layout of the Annual Performance Report for future years are welcome.

Please contact us on:

Email: PRM@flintshire.gov.uk